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This interview was conducted with Louis Corbin in October 1992. The interviewer is Danny Beatty.

DB: Chironomid fishing is now your favorite method of fishing Pass Lake. You've talked about that too, that you like to fish chironomid patterns.

LC: Yes.

DB: At this time is fishing with a chironomid pattern your favorite method?

LC: That's right.

DB: Has that changed in the last fifty years?

LC: Well it seems like I find something new every year or every time I go.

DB: Okay. Okay, that answers the next part of this question, which is do you fish Pass Lake the same way all time or do you change with the season?

LC: No, no, no, no, I very seldom catch two fish on the same fly; [oh I guess I always have a new pattern I want to try out]. I catch fish and change.

DB: Okay now, in terms of a method of fishing chironomid patterns, you've explained that to me, and we already have it written down here. I wrote that for the club newsletter a couple, three, years ago and that's pretty much the same.

LC: Yes, practically the same.

DB: Are there any other methods you could elaborate on besides what was in the newsletter?

LC: Well on the chironomid fishing early [in the season], I recently have been working with emergers, chironomid emergers a couple of patterns that have produced pretty well for me and it surprised me the size of fish that I catch with them.

DB: Small flies, big fish?

LC: Yes.

DB: That's what you're finding?

LC: On the emerger, yes.

DB: That's what you find unusual?

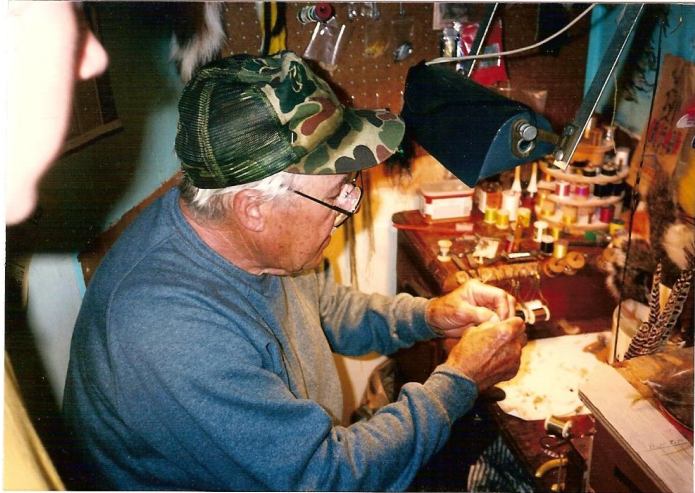
LC: I was fishing when the fish are active, feeding on the emergers. And yet, you very seldom find them, except early in the season before the weeds take over in [the] shallower areas.

DB: And so you may be in less than fifteen feet of water at that time?

LC: Oh yes, I've fished in water as shallow as two feet.

DB: Oh, and that's still with the chironomid emergers?

LC: Yes, the chironomid emergers, yes.



DB: Do you think that's because that area warms up quicker, and insects are starting to move more?

LC: Yes, I think that, I don't know, but it looks to me like [the fish] are concentrating on the pupa coming from the bottom and the shorter distances it has to travel to the surface and they're feeding in that area. If you notice, actually some of [the fish show as a] boil, that the fish are just almost slurping on the surface and another that they're deeper; they're at different depths, according to the boil. And therefore they're in shallower water where the fish don't have to travel to your emerger.

DB: I'm trying to think of a term that's used in some lakes for the fish that are doing that. Bulge?

LC: Slurping.

DB: Yes, that might be it. ...There's another, well I can't think of it.

LC: I [remember] that in the early days at Pass Lake, we had such tremendous hatches I couldn't describe them. Hatches that I would swear they would almost cover a quarter of the lake, and these big trout slurping through. Slurp, slurp.

DB: How many years has it been since you've seen that, approximately?

LC: I'd say prior to 1946, when the department of fish and game poisoned the lake. That was the last one. I put in my early morning and late evening fishing. I [did] a lot of late evening fishing, but also the early morning fishing. I've never seen that size hatches after that.

DB: What were these insects, mostly, that you remember?

LC: Them days I didn't know what insects were [laughs].

DB: [laughs] There were just lots of bugs in the air, right?

LC: Yes.

DB: Okay. Now a bit ago you said you're constantly changing flies and using different creations and so forth, but could you narrow it down to a favorite fly?

LC: Well, ye, [presently] it would be [nymph] patterns. I don't have the knowledge of bugs that I should have, but these large Mayflies, they could be March Browns, if there's a difference between a Mayfly and a March Brown I don't know, but I fool around with a lot of the nymph patterns.

DB: Do you have a name of a pattern that you use that would be recognized by another fly fisher if they went to Ed's (a fly fishing shop in Mount Vernon) or somewhere and looked in a box?

LC: Well, gosh, I'd say, I don't know how to describe them, maybe a cross between a half-back and a muskrat nymph. [laughs]

DB: [laughs] Okay, so these are flies [you developed] that over the time you [have] fished [in Pass Lake and they work] for you?

LC: Oh no, not over time, I tie them the night before and, like Danny Coleman says, "I'll bet you, I tied ten thousand flies that could have been killers and never found out."

DB: So the next question is, have you created a fly for Pass Lake, and that's obviously yes, that you've created strictly to use in that lake?

LC: No

DB: No?

LC: No. In the late Thirties I had flies that they called Louie's. [Shaving]-Brush Louies, cracker fly, all of that stuff, but I never put a name on the fly.

DB: Oh no, not that you tried to market a fly or name it, but, you have created them, that you use in Pass Lake. Like you say, the night before you go out, you tie up something that you like and you go out and use it.

LC: Oh yes, I've had patterns that I get anxious to catch a fish and I fall back on them. But the one dominant fly that started all of the hullabaloo in Pass Lake was the Black Ghost. When they turned it over to fly fishing only, I was the only fly fisherman in the area (there were others fly fishing around me) that fished [almost] entirely [by casting]. A lot of people blamed me for having it turned into fly fishing only. I told them they didn't have to be a fly fisherman to fish at fly fishing only that they could troll a fly and the fly that came to my mind was Black Ghost and it happened to be a real killer.

DB: A Black Ghost is a fly that could be trolled?

LC: Trolled, yes. The lake would be just covered with fishermen out there in the night, trolling with salmon [type] gear but they'd have a Black Ghost on.

DB: Okay. Are there any other patterns that come to mind over the years?

LC: Oh yes, the Knudsen Spider, tied minnow tight, not for the flaring wing but the wing that came down close around the hook, a lot like a, oh gosh what's that Canadian fly? [Six Pack] or some damn thing...but anyway. Then one of the most consistent flies over the years that I've used at Pass Lake was a Carrot Nymph, it was [tied] on a 3906B.

DB: What size hook? Any size particular that ...?

LC: Well it seemed like on my chironomid patterns, my emerger patterns, size twelve, was the most consistent. Of course you could go either way on that, but of course on your emerger patterns I don't go with 3906B twelve, I go with the, what was it? [3399], that [1x] wire, Mustad, that's my favorite.

DB: And go down to what? Sixteens maybe?



LC: Oh yes, I've fished Pass lake down to twenty, twenty-twos. But I don't have the success from them in Pass Lake that I have with other waters and its real small flies. Of course, now I don't fish with them because I can't see to thread the damn fly on [the leader].

DB: So now you stay primarily with chironomids from ten to fourteen, if you had to pick a favorite, that's it?

LC: Well I do fish around down to eighteens.

DB: Oh, down to eighteens, okay.

LC: Yes, but only when I spoon a fish and find them in the belly. I generally go for size of hook by the husks that I see in the water.

DB: Would you be willing to supply the club with a fly?

LC: Sure.

DB: And write out the recipe for it?

LC: Sure.

DB: Ok, we'll get to that next. Now, along with all these flies and you've told me a lot of ideas and so forth, do you have any tackle tips for fly fishing? Things that, if somebody read, what Louie said, and how he does things, they could get some idea how to go out there and fish the lake?

LC: Yes, there's one thing, on the clarity of the water, don't use too large of a leader the first part of the year you've got good clear water. Another thing, when you fish Pass Lake, you've got to spend a lot of hours on it, keep your fly in the water, and watch [the] the successful fishermen, the way they're fishing, and what they're fishing with, not so much the pattern, but it's the color and the silhouette.

DB: Good. See that's why we're talking to you. It is [that] you're a successful fisherman, that's why we're asking you and getting your ideas.

LC: I'm not a successful fisherman, at one time I was more or less successful for the times, but it seems like the success diminishes with the years. But I'm successful this way -- I'm fishing Pass Lake.

DB: Okay, that's good. The next question has to do with changes. Have there been changes in fishing methods and/or equipment that you think are significant in the time you've fished? Having to do with rods, lines, leaders?

LC: Oh yes, yes. Of course the biggest advantage of changes over, we're talking back over fifty years, is the tippet material. We used to have tippet material that's rated at a 3X but I don't believe we'd test out a pound. Now our 3X tippet is pretty husky. You're looking at eight, ten pounds, aren't you?

DB: I'd have to go get a chart, but I understand what you're saying, so to get the fine, fine diameters, you had to give up any strength to it, that's interesting. Go ahead.

LC: Then of course, your lines. At that time I fished a Hedge line, and what we called a four diameter line, both were for Pass Lake, no, in Pass Lake I fished an A belly and maybe B. I fished an eight and a half foot Granger Aristocrat, four ounce rod, which is real light rod; I also used that rod for summer runs. But, I don't know if you want to get into this.

DB: Go ahead, its okay.

LC: I used a five and three quarter ounce Granger, had a three and seven-eighths Hardy reel, I'll tell you that kicked the soup out of the arm, in a full days fishing. I used to start fishing a long line and wind up fishing about thirty-five to forty feet.

DB: By today's standards four to five ounce rods are pretty heavy aren't they?

LC: Oh man, that five and three quarter ounce Granger Premier, that'd be equivalent to about a twelve plus weight now. And to fish days, four diameter, Double A belly, Hedge on it. It'd get [to be] like a quarter each rope, practically.

DB: So you've seem a lot of changes in lines and rods?

LC: I think so, yes. Well I've seen practically all of it, yes.

DB: And I understand what you mean by, you even went as heavy as Double A belly, I understand what you're saying; I don't know how many young fishermen would understand all that. Maybe we'll get into that but, that Double A would be like [ten to twelve] weight now I suppose, heavier?

LC: Oh god, oh yes.

DB: B would be what? Comparable to eight weight?

LC: Well, yes, seven or eight.

DB: It seems like as I remember it, an HCH would be comparable to a six or seven now.

LC: Well, that was more or less a standard line.

DB: Standard line, yes.

LC: HCH, yes. I have all the material down in my shop.

DB: HCH would be in the middle today, that'd be kind of a six or seven weight line.

LC: Yes, that's right.

DB: Okay. Rods, you've gone from bamboo to, did you go through the fiberglass stage?

LC: Yes, oh yes, yes, I built fiberglass rods.

DB: And then the graphite of course.

LC: Yes. The only rods I've built have been the fiberglass [and graphite]; I never built any bamboo.

DB: Do you ever get out your old bamboo rods and think about using them again?

LC: Last bamboo rod I had was a rod that intrigued me, it was a cheap rod, it was a Granger, oh I forget, it was the lowest priced rod. I bought it in 1946 because I tried it in the shop and it had such a good feel to it, I paid, I think it was \$26.00 for it.

DB: Probably a favorite, Granger Favorite. Well, they were a less expensive one.

LC: I don't know what it is, but it was their cheapest rod anyway, boy it was a reliant, throwing son of a gun.

DB: \$26.00.

LC: That's the rod that I sent over, donated, while I was in the hospital in Seattle. Weren't you there at that time?

DB: Yes, I think so.

LC: The guy, the two guys that hung on to it all day.

DB: Okay, right, I remember, yes.

LC: Yes, you could throw a hundred feet of line with that pretty easily, in the morning when you had your strength.

DB: Okay, so the new equipment allows you to fish longer, with less effort.

LC: In the afternoon, after a days fishing the back of my hand would be so lame that I could hardly [hold the rod], that's one thing I think that taught me (not knowing) that I had to hold my wrist rigid. Because you play down, would be moving it, just naturally, and later on a year [or so] I found out, or read, that I had to keep the wrist rigid. [Well I wondered] how the heck did I do that when I got rod on my way to cast. I think it was from the real heavy equipment that forced me in to it, because that would be so lame, so lame in the evenings.

DB: Right and it would affect your wrist in terms almost like tennis elbow, or what's this carpel problem people get. Do you have any other comments about the equipment over the years?

LC: I see a lot of improvements in vests, I've got a vest down there that I could have you look at that I bought in the Thirties (what's left of it). You wouldn't believe it. [We] were used to fishing baskets, have our gear in a basket, at one time it was popular to have a, oh I can show you right out the window there, see that leather pouch on the end of the basket?

DB: Yes.

LC: That carried my fly tackle.

DB: Okay, I probably should have brought a camera. Maybe I will sometime, come back and get a camera. Has the quality of the fishing experience, not necessarily the number of fish or the size of fish and that, but just the fishing experience, being out on the lake and all that, has that changed since you started fishing Pass lake, do you think?

LC: Yes, I don't have the desire and the drive to get out there and do it like I used to. I used to have such an intent desire to fish, and I had to have a big fish, all that stuff, which is, its immaterial anymore, its just



enjoyment to have a fish on, but when you hooked a fish the honeymoons over, you got to land the sucker or turn him lose. That's why that I get so criticized out there at times for breaking fish off but I figure the fish is heavy and I've had him on longer and he's getting hard to release safely, but your fly off of him.

DB: Once you get there, the enjoyment is still there though. It's a little harder to make the effort to go but once you get there, you kind of get back into the feel of the lake.

LC: I think the biggest enjoyment that I get now is being able to go down in my shop and tie a few ties and I come up here and I read and I get an idea of a pattern and I see a pattern and I think well I could improve on that, go down there and work on it. That's one of my biggest enjoyments now.

DB: So your fishing experience extends beyond Pass Lake? Isn't that what I hear you say, that, you think about going fishing, you do some reading, you go tie some flies, and then you go to the lake -- it's an all involved thing.

LC: That's right.

DB: Of a number of steps to do it, rather than just getting in the truck and running out and going fishing.

LC: I think that in the overall picture, I'm enjoying fly fishing more now than I ever did because I enjoy more facets of the doggone game. I enjoy talking to people, which I never had before. [I used to tell them] I'd be a nice fella if I wasn't such an old grouch.

DB: Okay, that's interesting.

LC: See, I never had time to talk to them -- that took fishing time.

DB: Yes, and that's what I hear you saying, that now that the experience in more than just casting a line and hooking a fish.

LC: That's right.

DB: Yes.

LC: Although, I feel that old intensity when the fish are rising, but it's hard for me to execute. I have to be careful you know when I come in to shore; I'm more liable to fall out of the boat than I am to step out of it.

DB: We're not really looking at that aspect of it, [you were] were more interested in the mental, the mental aspect of it.

LC: Yes, well I still feel like [if] somebody's out there catching a lot of fish and I'm not, I just as soon sink his boat.

DB: Okay. Do you have any knowledge about the Pass Lake fishing regulation changes that have occurred over the past fifty years?

LC: The last how many years?

DB: Well over the fifty years, roughly fifty years, you've been fishing.

LC: Well, originally Pass Lake, if my memory's correct (I think it is), our limit at Pass Lake was six pounds and one fish.

DB: Okay.

LC: It could be, my memory's so bad.

DB: That sounds about right.

LC: Anyway, I've seen so many limits come out of Pass Lake, three fish, that's probably what I'm trying to judge the limit on, see. [(During that time when the limit was six pounds plus one fish)].

DB: Okay, and over the years the regulations changed.

LC: It went up one time to fifteen fish. I think that was on the catch and keep deals. Because I limited in a little over an hour and the fish were about 8-10 inches because I had a five dollar bet with Old Doc Rose, he went to Hummel Lake on Lopez Island, he wanted to go over there with him, and he had a \$5.00 bet that he'd catch more fish than I would because he figured that if I limited out, I'd limit out on a big fish, but I knew where this hatch or this plant was with real small fish because I had observed them in my scout of the darn lake and I'd [catch one] practically every cast, then I had a hell of a time collecting my five bucks.

DB: Were you involved in developing any of the changes that occurred when it went to fly fishing only?

LC: No, because I wasn't fishing the lake much.

DB: And, do you recall, and why, the lake, for about ten years from 1955 to 1965 went back to regular lake [regulations]?

LC: No I don't because I wasn't fishing the lake that much.

DB: You'd just go out Opening Day?

LC: From 1951 when I lost my fishing partner to darn near 1980, I only fished the lake maybe a dozen times a year.

DB: So regulation changes didn't really have an affect on the fishing you were doing?

LC: No.

DB: Okay, and you didn't have any part in any changes or?

LC: The only part that I had was when they poisoned the lake. I furnished boats and help for it.

DB: That was in 1946?

LC: Yes, 1946.

DB: Was the lake well known then?

LC: Yes.

DB: Would you describe any physical changes you have observed since you first saw Pass Lake? Things like water level, shorelines, construction along the shoreline? Anything there?

LC: Yes, yes. Pass Lake, if you were to see it the way that I fished it prior to 1946, that was when they raised the level to put in the fill there on that Cougar Gap Road [(Rosario Road)} and done away with that swamp, and the little [outlet] creek down to Bowman Bay, [put their culvert in there and stuff]. I think they had that in prior to 1946 because if my memory serves me correct, we assembled in that area, which is the access area now, to poison Pass Lake in 1946. The Lake has looked to me like its about three feet higher now than it was when I first fished it, because [there were] a lot of little beaches on the lake and there

[were] beaches going south as you first hit the lake on that point on the south end of that bay, [and there] was an area there where you could pull a row boat clear out of the water up on the beach.

DB: And now its fairly steep bank.

LC: The beach is there but it's under water.

DB: Yes. Do you remember when the road was constructed along the edge of the lake?

LC: No, because the road was in when I [arrived] and that would be prior to 1935. There's some interesting changes on the bottom there of that lake from road construction. The road construction there has banks that are sluffed off into the lake, fill channels.

DB: Okay, anything else on lake changes you can think of that'd be pertinent?

LC: Well nothing to describe it, but I'd have to have a map of the lake to show you.

DB: I should have brought one and I didn't and I apologize for that.

LC: I'm out of them.

DB: Oh, are you? We'll have to get you some. Why do you think Pass Lake is well suited for fly fishing?

LC: I don't think Pass Lake is suited for fly fishing.

DB: Oh, okay.

LC: I think it's a poor fly fishing lake because of its low lake structure, you don't have enough definite drop-offs, you don't have enough weed areas, shallow waters, originally, I think it was be a good fly lake. I know at first, but it's got too much depth in it now for fly fishing. Another thing Pass Lake is a cold lake.

DB: Okay.

LC: But it warms up, you take that [doggone] lake, I've seen it get into March before you can get 44 degree water, but last year it was 44 degree water in February.

DB: Yes. Originally, before this three foot raise there was more structure, more shoals.

LC: Yes, that's right, more nice weed areas, and the fish responded to a fly fisherman. Now you have to be a troller. You weren't deep fishing. I think there's lot of, maybe I'm speaking out of line, something I don't know anything about, but I think that there's a lot of phosphorus in the water now that we didn't have before, because I never knew of the algae on Pass Lake until recent years. I remember one time during the Forties that we had algae, but we don't have [enough water for] the doggone lake to flush, and we don't have the water coming in to the lake that we used to have because of the deforestation, and the un-maintained water levels, we don't have the spring holes that we used to have for summer time fishing.

DB: Okay, that's good information though we hate to admit it. Do you have any anecdotes or stories that you'd like to share with people about the lake?

LC: Oh I don't have any of them. I wouldn't know what to talk about

DB: Anything that really comes to mind that? Over the years, that?

LC: Yes, in a way, I wouldn't know what to say. I could write ten volumes on things that happened on Pass Lake. Maybe the best one of all would be the one time that I fell in the lake out of the boat. Old Bill Scott

and I were fishing Opening Day and he had part of a fifth of whiskey, but I had a full bottle and we were fishing along. In my fly fishing boats, I only put one seat in them. Bill not being a fly fisherman, well we were trolling, and I was sitting in a folding chair in the back by the transom, right up against the transom. I laid my gloves down on the gunnel of the boat, leaned forward, they fell in the lake, and I reached over to get them and the chair upset me. Well it so happened that Bill towed me ashore and we get up there on the rock, of course we were concerned, or aware, that there was a hundred fishermen out on the lake all observing this. But he says, –Corbin,” he says, –I’ve got on two suits of underwear.” Of course, you know, I took one of his suits of underwear, and he got to laughing at me and I said, –You old son of a so and so, I’m going to walk back, I’m not going to ride back to the car with you.” So I hiked around the lake, [across the Heilman fields], walking around the lake in a union suit. Of course I heard all about this afterwards. I don’t know how it escaped the papers but it did. One guy told me, he says, he see me come down to the, they had a herd of Herefords, he says you come down there and there’s a bull standing out there, you just walked up to him, and shook a fist at him, and walked right through the herd.

DB: This was when, in the Fifties? Do you remember approximately?

LC: I think it was the Fifties, maybe the Sixties.

DB: That’s an anecdote. Did you walk all the way home?

LC: No, all the way around to my car.

DB: Oh you went back to your car, I see.

LC: He rowed.

DB: Oh that’s a good story; I bet you could elaborate on that one a lot. Well that covers a lot of questions that I wrote up, now, my last question is do you have any ideas not covered in this interview that would be useful to fly fishers planning to fish Pass Lake the first time, or just getting in to fly fishing? In other words, I couldn’t think of every question or every other thing, that nuance that you might have in mind and so this is just kind of open ended.

LC: I think that Pass Lake is one of the best places for a guy to start, other than the fact that the beginners should be able to catch a lot of fish, but it’s a trolling lake and you can do that without having a lot of expensive gear. Not only that, it’s a scenic lake, it’s a clean lake, it’s a pure lake, and we don’t have many lakes like Pass Lake anymore. It’s actually a clean lake. Clean water. It’s a nice atmosphere to fish in.

DB: If this person that we’re thinking about, this new fly fisher to Pass Lake fisher and he were to start simple ways, trolling, and so forth, how would you rig him up? If you were to hand him a fly rod, line, fly and everything, and told him to go fishing with it?

LC: Well what I would give him would be a floating sink tip, for the simple reason that, [though] they’re a bit harder to cast, because it’s on a floated end, you got the line in vision. When you troll the lake, watch his line for movement, and it’s easier to regulate the depth without dragging the bottom, you know what I mean?

DB: Yes, I do.

LC: You can regulate your depth. What I would prefer would be a ten foot sink tip because you can put a weighted fly on there and any length of leader desired for the depth you want, because if you’re going to troll, the best method of trolling is slow. If you need a faster troll, you still put the leader that would go down to the bottom and I think that the best way to even troll a fly is [to] let it down to the bottom, pick up your rod, give it a few quick jerks, and not only that, but you have the advantage with the sink tip of walking your fly along the bottom easier. A fellow can learn to get more action, different actions on his fly with the sink tip [than he can with a full sinking line].

DB: What fly would you put on that?

LC: Well the number one fly for Pass Lake as far as I'm concerned, and what the fellows, I've talked to a lot of fellows out there, the most luck comes from your, oh god, the most popular fly, what was that? What was on that troll flies?

DB: Carey Special?

LC: That's a good one, very good.

DB: Doc Spratley?

LC: That's a good one too, but there better ones than that. That's your ... oh gosh.

DB: A nymph type? Nyerges Nymph?

LC: More on the Leech type.

DB: A leech pattern?

LC: Yes.

DB: Black leech pattern?

LC: Black leech or, I think the best color on your leeches at Pass Lake is your olive.

DB: We'd have to get a pattern book out to find it I guess. I don't know.

LC: Here we go, it's the Wooley Worm.

DB: Wooley Worm.

LC: But they were tied on this size hook, that's why I couldn't find one, I thought we had one; they were tied on this size here. That's a big Wooley Worm. [Hook size 6, 3X long]. Pardon me.

DB: This is a Grizzly hen hackle?

LC: Yes.

DB: So you use either the grizzly or the badger depending on what you're trying to...

LC: Well the badger is for the [Wooley] Bugger.

DB: I've got a lot of stuff on here Louie. We've used up half this tape.

LC: Huh?

DB: I've used up one side of the tape. You have any more comments, we'll make an open mike here, I'm about to the end.

How long a leader would you give that person that you got the ten foot sink tip, about a nine foot leader?

LC: Well, if I were fishing in eighteen feet of water, I'd fish at least twelve to fifteen feet of leader.

DB: But now we're talking about starting a beginning fly fisher that wasn't too used to working lines and stuff?

LC: Yes I'd keep his leader down short -- nine feet minimum, because he gives his fly down, see your fly won't go as deep as your leader. But that's close enough, he's better off fishing with a fly above the fish than below.

DB: Yes, and were also thinking it terms of his handling a long leader, that takes some skill to handle a long leader.

LC: Oh yes. Now I bet that the fishing [back in] them days was mostly streamer flies, either that or that Carrot Nymph. Let me have your pencil. I was covering a fish, I get on my knees in a row boat and I maneuver that fish and I work on him, and work on him until I get the cast that I want. I didn't just stand in the boat and cast, cast, cast. The fish would rise here then they come down here and I'd count. Have I run through this for you before?

DB: No I'm concerned about my tape, go ahead, I'm watching you and watching this too.

LC: And when he [broke] through water, they'd be consistent, there wouldn't be over two, three counts difference. Say if he could, rise every thirty counts see. Those old rainbows, they go in a strait line see, they've got a nice hatch, nice cover sheet, just porpoising. When I want to fish, this would be the fish we'll say, here's his eyes, see, I want to be right off his eye, like this. So [lets] say we've got thirty counts, so at the count of twenty-eight, I [cast] that fly going this way, because I know right where he is going to raise. I put that fly right here, streamer fly, she goes in to the water like this. And the way I do that is I cast so that the line goes down.

End of Side One, Tape One

LC: You got leader control, right out from the end, if you have too long of leader, now the lake's got those variable little breezes that throw your fly off. It's [(leader)] got to have a stiff enough [tip]. It don't make any difference about the size of the leader, because he isn't looking at it sidewise. He's looking right at the [fly]; the fly comes out there just like this, see. Now that takes some [doing].

DB: I was going to say for you to maneuver your boat, watch his line of travel, that's your first thing, and his timing, and line your boat exactly where you want it and present that cast almost identical to his coming up, that's—

LC: Sometimes I can get it out there a pretty good distance but I'd say you got to keep off there about 40-45 feet to make it effective. If you're too close, you can't, the whole thing has to be just right. Timing out there, I go out there and I fish all through a rise. [Others I see] proud to be standing up beating] the water you know, and I be down on my knees working on a fish, and maybe I'd be lucky to be able to cover five fish in an evening, and if I hope one of them sounds good, I just, I would cut down on my time too, I don't believe I ever did catch four fish an evening.

DB: What streamer pattern were you using?

LC: Mostly the old Knutsen Spider.

DB: Do you think that fly would still work?

LC: I don't know. I can't do that anymore. Old Ken McLeod used to write "The Singing Reel" in the [Seattle] PI. I think I've got it here in my scrap book, the article that he challenged me to an evenings fishing on the lake, and he fishes Nylon Nymph and me fished the Spider, because I called him an armchair fisherman. But I wouldn't accept any challenge from that [guy]; he's a hundred times more fly fisherman

than I am, Old Ken. He was a hell of a good friend of mine you know, who fished the Stilly. I spent some time in his cabin.

DB: He was a fishing partner of yours, not on Pass Lake though?

LC: Well, I'm not old enough to be his fishing partner, but I fished a lot with his daughter, Mary.

DB: Oh, and you mentioned a Doctor Rose, what was his first name?

LC: Virgil.

DB: Virgil?

LC: Yes, Dr. Virgil Rose. He was, actually my fishing partner.

DB: And he was from Seattle?

LC: Yes; dentist.

DB: He was a dentist? Are there any others that you've fished with, I know that you said Ralph Handy was kind of your first one out there but are there others over the years?

LC: Well Ralph and Virgil and I, we fished threesome a lot -- just a lot. See Virgil and Ralph are friends too. See he used to be in Anacortes, he was an Anacortes dentist.

DB: Oh he was?

LC: Yeah, at _____.

DB: Okay.

LC: And then I started to take him fly fishing. I went to him for an appointment right after I hit Anacortes, and he's a fisherman see. When I asked him for the bill, he says, "Well it's a little different payment on this, I want to be a fly fisherman, and there's no charges on this bill because you're going to make me a fly fisher." And I said, "Okay, you got any gear?" "No," but he said, "I'll give you the money, here's twenty dollars, I want you to go out and buy me the best fly fishing outfit made." And I said, "Well Doc, the first thing to do would be a Hedge line, will cost you eighteen bucks. He says, "Well, well, well," he said, "whatever it takes!" And that was the beginning of a long friendship.

DB: To me that's an interesting anecdote right there, an interesting story. This was about 1940-45? Somewhere in there?

LC: No, well actually, let's see that was about 1935, 1936. I'm not sure, just can't be honest with you [on that.].

DB: But what's interesting to me is you were paying as much for a line then as you are now.

LC: Hedge lines, oh you bet your life, \$18.00 a copy. They were all hand-made you know and Hedge, he was a champion caster. Now he was the guy that came out with the bullet-head, but they were called bullet-head not torpedo-head to start with.

DB: Now I want to get this name right, is Hedge, H-E-D-G-E?

LC: Yes, that's right. You'll find that in fly fishing history some place.

DB: Oh yes, I'm sure; I just wanted to make sure I had the right spelling. So where the rod was \$26.00 which now you couldn't duplicate for hundreds of dollars.

LC: Well that rod that I paid \$26.00 for after the war was \$16.00 then.

DB: Yes, but that rod now would be, something comparable, would be hundreds of dollars, even a cheap bamboo rod now, whereas lines because of manufacturing methods.

LC: You see the premier rod that I brought that I had only cost me a \$110.00 wholesale.

DB: And now It'd be \$1200.00 I suppose, I have no idea, but.

LC: Yes, and the Aristocrat, it was \$48.00 wholesale, that little four ounce, oh god, I love that rod.

DB: Those are interesting comparisons.

LC: Yes, I know. Now this rod that Emory Harrison bought from me, that I had built in Chattanooga, Tennessee by Williams, the rod builder, I paid him fifty bucks for it. It was a skin rod; it was built with a bamboo rind. You know that when bamboo came it had a dark rind on it but they always shaved it off, [when] they made [these]. [Well] he only built to be, shaved the bees that come together, the outside of the rod had the rind on it, and it was uneven, and had exceptional power, and I'd take that rod and I'd whip it just hard as I could with a line in it see, and some fellows wanted to see it. And, gee, you could knock out a hundred with that old big heavy weight. I think it was a five and a half ounce, you just drive that doggone line a hundred feet no problem at all, and Emory Harrison wanted that rod, so he bought it, I sold it to him. So he was showing the fellows, the power it had it but didn't have a line it and he broke it at the ferrule see. And I was in at Danny's. "Louie," he says, "I got a rod I want to show you, a hand built rod." He (Danny) brought it out and I said, "Where in the hell did you get that? I had that rod built." "You did? Hell, no you didn't, Emory Harrison had it built." I said, "No, Emory Harrison didn't have it built."

DB: Then did he (Harrison) have it fixed after he broke it?

LC: No, he never had it fixed.

DB: It's still broken?

LC: Yes.

DB: Well, I was going to ask you if you knew that somebody in the club owns that rod now, but you know that, don't you?

LC: Yes, oh yes.

DB: Because Danny, and Robin LaRue and I, and I don't know who else bought the rods that he had.

LC: You did?

DB: Oh yes. I got the Shooting Star, that Orvis Shooting Star, that one that he used for Steelhead on the Stilly. And Danny got one and Robin LaRue bought one, I can't remember, his was more of a conventional trout rod, probably for about a six weight line.

TAPE CUTS OFF